



HE LIVES!

I DO NOT KNOW if you have had the experience of gaining an insight or receiving a revelation so important that you wished it could be preserved forever. If you have, or if you have even experienced that in a partial way, you will understand the tone in which Job spoke his most widely quoted lines, beginning, "I know that my Redeemer lives." We hear something said in a particularly vivid way, and we say, "If I could just remember that!" Or we have an insight and say, "If I could just get that written down so I won't forget it!"

That was the feeling that Job experienced. He had suffered a great deal, first by the loss of his possessions, then by the loss of his ten children and eventually his own health. His friends came to comfort but actually abused him, charging that his misfortunes were the result of some particularly outstanding

sin in his life. In the midst of one reply Job gave vent to the insight to which I am referring.

Job perceived that his story was not being told completely in this life and that a later day would vindicate him. In fact, he perceived that there was an *individual* who would vindicate him, even Jesus Christ, whom Job calls “my Redeemer.” This individual would stand on the earth in some future day, would raise Job from death, and would enable him to see God.

Can you imagine Job’s excitement as he gave expression to this hope? There were not many who shared it in Job’s day; few understood it. So Job said that he wished his words might be preserved. “Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!” (Job 19:23–24). Fortunately for us, Job’s wish was fulfilled. Not only were his words preserved in a book; they have been preserved in the Book of books, the Bible.

A KINSMAN-REDEEMER

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth” (19:25).

The first thing we shall look at in Job’s statement is its key word: “Redeemer.” This is a rich and particularly illuminating term. In Hebrew the word is *goel*, which refers to a relative who performs the office of a redeemer for his kin. We must visualize a situation in which a Hebrew has lost his inheritance through debt. He has mortgaged his estate and, because of a lack of money to meet the debt, is about to lose it. This happened in the case of Naomi and Ruth so that, although they

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had once possessed land, they had become impoverished. In such a situation it was the *goel's* duty, as the next of kin, to buy the inheritance; that is, to pay the mortgage and restore the land to his relative. Boaz did that for Ruth.

That custom is what Job refers to in his expression of faith in a divine Redeemer, and it is why this passage must refer to Job's own resurrection. As Job spoke those words he was in dire physical condition. He had lost family and health. He must have imagined that he was about to lose his life, too. He would die. Worms would destroy his body. But that was not the end of the story. For his body, like the land, was his inheritance; and there is one who will redeem it for him. Years may go by, but at the latter day the Redeemer will stand upon the earth and will perform the office of a *goel* in raising his body. He will bring Job into the presence of God.

I recognize that there are different ways of translating the phrase "Yet in my flesh I will see God" (19:26). Some versions read, "Yet without my flesh." But those fail to make full sense of the passage. What is redeemed if it is not Job's body? Not the soul or spirit certainly, for those are never forfeited. And not Job's physical possessions, for the passage is not even considering them. It is the body that will be redeemed. Consequently, it is in this body and with his own physical eyes that Job expects to see God.

A second duty of the *goel* was to redeem by power, if that should be necessary. Abraham performed this duty when Lot had been captured by the four kings who made war against the king of Sodom and his allies. Abraham armed his household, pursued the four kings and their prisoners, and then, attacking by night, recovered both prisoners and spoil. That

is what the Lord Jesus Christ did, was it not? He attacked in power—we speak rightly of resurrection power—and broke death’s hold.

Finally, the *goel* had a duty to avenge a death. Imagine that an Israelite has been attacked and is dying. The *goel* learns who has struck his relative. He snatches up his own sword and dashes off to avenge the murder. Our Christ is likewise our avenger. We are dying people, but we have a Redeemer. We read of Him: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. . . . Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:25–26, 55–57).

A LIVING REDEEMER

As we think about his words in greater detail, we discover next that Job took confidence, not only in the fact that he had a Redeemer, but that he had a *living* Redeemer. That is important, because a redeemer must be living to perform his function.

If Job had been able to say merely that he had a Redeemer, that would have been wonderful. If he could have said further that the Redeemer of whom he was speaking was the Christ, that would have been even more wonderful. To have known such a one, to have been related to him, to have been able to look back to what he had done—all that would have been both pleasant and comforting. But so far as the present need was concerned it would have been inadequate. A person in that

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position could say, “I had a Redeemer, and I value that.” But he would undoubtedly add, “But I wish I had him now.” A redeemer must be living if he is to buy back the estate, recover the prisoners, and defeat the enemy.

Job does not say that he *had* a Redeemer. He says that he *has* a Redeemer and that he is *living*. We too have a living Redeemer, the same Redeemer, who is Jesus.

That is the thrust of our testimony on Easter Sunday and indeed on every other Lord’s Day. We testify that Jesus rose from the dead and that He ever lives to help all who call upon Him. The evidences for this are overwhelming. There is the evidence of the narratives themselves. They are quite evidently four separate and independent accounts, for if they were not, there would not be so many apparent discrepancies—the time at which the women went to the tomb, the number of the angels, and so on. At the same time, it is also obvious that there is a deep harmony among them—not a superficial harmony but rather a detailed harmony that is increasingly evident as the accounts are analyzed. In fact, the situation is precisely what we should expect if the accounts are four independent records of those who were eyewitnesses.

One writer summarized the evidence like this:

It is plain that these accounts must be either a record of facts that actually occurred, or else fictions. If fictions, they must have been fabricated in one of two ways, either independently of one another, or in collusion with one another. They cannot have been made up independently; the agreements are too marked and too many. They cannot have been made up in collusion . . . the apparent discrepancies are too numerous and too noticeable. Not made up independently,

not made up in collusion, therefore it is evident that they were not made up at all. They are a true relation of facts as they actually occurred.¹

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is also proved by the transformed lives of the disciples. Before the resurrection two negative charges could be made against them; and these by their own confession. First, they had failed to understand Jesus' teaching about His crucifixion and resurrection. Second, they were cowardly. Peter had said that he would defend Jesus to the death and that he would never deny Him. But on the night of the arrest he did deny Him. He abandoned Him, as did the other disciples. On the day of the resurrection, but before Jesus had appeared to them in the upper room, we find them hiding for fear of the Jews. Yet hours later they were standing up boldly in Jerusalem to denounce the execution of Jesus and call for faith in Him. Moreover, when they were arrested later we do not find them cowering in fear of the future but rather giving full testimony to Christian faith and doctrine. What made the difference? What made cowards bold, a scattering body of individuals into a cohesive force, disillusioned followers into evangelists? Only one thing accounts for it: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are many evidences, but I cannot help but mention a third—the change in the day of worship. Before the resurrection the followers of Christ worshiped, as did all Jews, on Saturday. The need to do this would not even have been questioned—it had been practiced for centuries. Yet from

1. R.A. Torrey, *The Bible and Its Christ: Being Noontide Talks with Business Men on Faith and Unbelief* (New York: Revell, 1904-1906), pp. 60-61.

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that time on we find the newly formed body of Christians meeting, not on Saturday, but on the first day of the week, Sunday. Clearly it was because of Jesus' resurrection.

A PERSONAL REDEEMER

There is a third point to Job's statement. Not only does Job declare that he has a Redeemer, not only does he affirm that He is a living Redeemer—he adds, quite properly, that He is *his* Redeemer. “My” is the word he uses. “I know that *my* Redeemer lives.” Do you know that “my” in relation to Jesus Christ? It is a reminder of the need for personal religion.

This is what we desire, is it not? We are persons, and we desire personal relationships. We are made in God's image, as persons; so we desire a personal relationship with God.

In my church I notice that the young people often have a great deal of appreciation for one another. There are young women, for instance, who greatly appreciate certain young men. And there are young men who greatly appreciate certain young women, even though they sometimes fail to say so. That is a wonderful thing. I am glad that virtue and good looks are noticed. But I have observed that in addition there are also many young women who would like to be able to say, not only, “Look at that fellow; how handsome he is!” but also, “Look at *my* fellow.” And some of the young men would like to say, “Look at *my* girl.” Admiration is good, but personal involvement is better.

That is our privilege in relation to Christ. It is good to admire Him. He is the risen Lord of glory after all; it would be foolish not to do so. But how much better to

know Him personally, as Job did. Jesus came to earth to die for sin and to rise again. Can you say, “My God came as *my* Redeemer to die for *my* sin and to rise again for *my* justification”? You give no real evidence of being a Christian until you can.

Do not delay. Do not say, “I’ll do it next year.” I can give no guarantee that you will be here next year. On the contrary, *some* who read these words will not be. Even tomorrow may be too late. The Bible says, “Now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

ASSURANCE

I would also like you to possess Job’s assurance. That is the fourth point. Not only does Job refer to his Redeemer and declare that He is both a living and personal Redeemer, he also says that he knows these things: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.” You should possess such assurance if you are a Christian.

I do not know why some people think that it is meritorious to express doubt in matters of religion. They think that it is somehow vain or impolite to be certain and that it is humble and therefore desirable to say, “I do not know. . . . I hope so. . . . I would like to believe. . . . I think. . . .” Nothing could be more faulty. The humble person is the one who bows before God’s revelation and accepts it because of who God is. It is the proud man who thinks he knows enough about anything to doubt God. Besides, God says that doubt is the equivalent of calling Him a liar; it is as much as to say that His word is untrustworthy (cf. 1 John 5:10).

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Jesus lives! Believe it! Declare it! Act upon it! Say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives,” and realize that certain important benefits flow from it.

What are those benefits? We have already alluded to them. The most obvious is that believers in Jesus Christ will live again. Job refers to that by adding, “After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God” (v. 26). Because our Redeemer lives, we shall live. His resurrection is the pledge of our own.

Then, too, we shall see God. That is the second benefit. We shall live again and in that living form shall see God. What a wonderful thought. And how much more wonderful than anything else that might be said. Notice that Job does not say, “I shall see heaven.” That was true, but it was relatively unimportant compared to the fact that he would see God. Spurgeon wrote, “He does not say, ‘I shall see the pearly gates, I shall see the walls of jasper, I shall see the crowns of gold and the harps of harmony,’ but ‘I shall see God’; as if that were the sum and substance of heaven.”² Nor does he say, “I shall see the holy angels.” That would have been a magnificent sight, at least it seems so to us as we look through the eyes of John the evangelist, who wrote the book of Revelation. I find few scenes more thrilling than John’s description. But that too pales beside the gaze of the soul on God. Notice, finally, that Job did not even say, “I shall see those of this world who have gone to heaven before me,” even though that would be a great joy and his departed children would be among them. Job would see all these things: the pearly gates, the holy angels,

2. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth,” in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 9 (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), p. 214.

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his children. But over and above and infinitely more glorious than any of those, he would see God.

Do not think that this is a narrow vista, wonderful but small, like looking at one of those old-fashioned pastoral scenes within a candy egg. God is infinite. To see God is to experience perfect contentment and to be satisfied in all one's faculties.

LIVING MEMORIALS

Our conclusion is this: If Job, who lived at the dawn of recorded history, centuries before the time of the Lord Jesus Christ—if Job knew these things, how much more should we know them, we who are aware of Christ's resurrection and have witnessed His power in our lives. Job lived in a dark and misty time, before the dawning of the Lord Jesus Christ, that sun of righteousness. Job lived in an age before Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. If he had failed to understand about the resurrection and had failed to believe in it, who could blame him? Nobody. Yet he believed. How much more then should we?

Can you say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God"? If so, then live in that assurance. Do not fear death. During the next twelve months death will certainly come for some, but there will also be a resurrection. Besides, Jesus is also coming; and if that should happen soon, He will receive us all.

I add one more thought. We believe these truths, yes. But let us not only believe them; let us pass them on so that oth-

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ers may share in this resurrection faith also. What was Job's desire after all? It was that his words might be preserved and that his faith in the resurrection might be saved for coming generations. The resurrection hope has come down to us through many centuries of church history. Let it pass to our children and to our children's children until the living Lord Jesus Christ returns in His glory. Jesus Christ lives. He lives! Then let us tell others, and let us shout with Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth."